News release

Impacts of climate change

2 February 2005

Africa could bear the brunt of the damage from projected human-induced climate change, according to Bill Hare, Visiting Scientist, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

Speaking on day two of the Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change international conference at the Met Office's headquarters in Exeter this week, Mr Hare outlined the global risks for species, ecosystems, agriculture, water and socio-economic conditions.

He claimed that below a 1 °C temperature increase, the level of risk is low, but not insignificant, particularly for highly vulnerable ecosystems. In the 1–2 °C increase range, risks across the board increase significantly, and are often substantial at a regional level.

However, once the rise reaches 2 °C and above, the risks increase very substantially, involving potentially large extinctions or even ecosystem collapses, major increases in hunger and water shortage risks, as well as socio-economic damages. This is of particular concern in developing countries, with Africa consistently amongst the regions with high to very high projected damages.

The conference, organised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), aims to advance the scientific understanding of the long-term implications of climate change, the relevance of stabilisation goals and options to reach such goals. It also aims to encourage research and international scientific debate on these issues.

Details of the speakers and papers being presented can be found at the Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change Conference web site.

Download Avoiding dangerous climate change brochure (PDF, 889 kb)

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